

Basic Discipleship

A Course On New Testament Discipleship

Topic #2

EXPERIENCING FORGIVENESS & FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

Objectives: As a result of the study of this topic we want to be able:

- 1. To understand the doctrine of sin as it relates to actions, attitudes and doubtful things.**
- 2. To be able to relate four governing principles to what is sometimes referred to as “gray areas” or as a “disputable matters.”**
- 3. To recognize three forces that wage war against the true child of God.**
- 4. To distinguish between positional and experiential forgiveness.**
- 5. To recognize the importance of confession in keeping our lives clear and clean before God.**
- 6. To discern the difference between real guilt and false guilt.**
- 7. To memorize two verses of Scripture that will help the Christian to consistently walk in fellowship with God.**

Introduction

I. The Doctrine of Sin

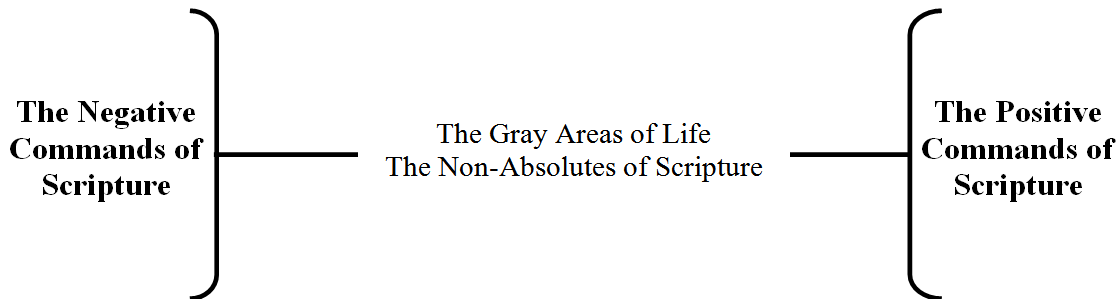
In a day when people think truth is relative or cannot be discovered at all, their tendency is to describe sin as psychological maladjustments, errors in judgment, or as glandular mal functions. So, it is important that we can define sin biblically.

A. Sin defined

- 1. Sin is a failure to do what is right (James 4:17).**
- 2. Sin is a transgression of God’s law (1 John 3:4; Ephesians 2:1).**
- 3. Sin is falling short of what we should have done (Romans 3:23).**

B. Sin described

- 1. Sin is most often described in terms of our actions (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:19-21).**
- 2. Sin is sometimes described in terms of attitudes (Matthew 5:27, 28; 1 John 3:15).**
- 3. Every sin is not delineated in Scripture, but God gives us principles to discern whether something is sinful are clearly spelled out.**



- a. We are not to do anything that might cause another brother to stumble (Romans 14:13, 21; 1 Corinthians 8:13).**
 - b. Whatever cannot be done in faith from a clear conscience, it is sin (Romans 14:23; 1 John 3:21; Hebrews 11:6a).**
 - c. Whatever cannot be done to glorify God is sin (1 Corinthians 10:31).**
 - d. Whatever appears to be evil by choices we make lessens our testimony for God & therefore is sin (1 Thessalonians 5:22).**
- C. Sin is judged in the unbeliever (Ephesians 2:1-3; John 3:36; Matthew 25:46; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10).**
- D. Sin is disciplined in the believer (Hebrews 12:4-11).**
- 1. Ananias and Sapphira were disciplined by God (Acts 5:1-11).**
 - 2. The Corinthians were disciplined by God (1 Corinthians 11:30).**

II. The Doctrine of Temptation

There are three forces that incessantly wage war against the Christian the world, the flesh & the devil. Understanding how these forces can function independently or in conjunction with each other, is important in overcoming temptation.

A. Three forces wage war against the believer.

1. The world system counters God's ways (Ephesians 2:1-3; 2 Corinthians 4:4; John 16:33; Philippians 3:20).

The solution is not to love the world (1 John 2:15-17).

2. The flesh, our fallen sinful nature remains in opposition to our new nature given at our second birth (Galatians 5:17; Romans 7:18-21).

The solution is to make no provision for the flesh and to walk in the power of the Spirit (Romans 13:14; Galatians 5:17; Ephesians 5:18; Romans 8:2).

3. The devil wages war against the Christian (1 Peter 5:7, 8).

The solution is to respect him because he is dangerous (1 Peter 5:8; Jude 9), we are to recognize him because he is a great pretender (2 Cor. 11:13-15; John 8:44;), and we are to resist him (James 4:8-10) using our divinely inspired weapons (Ephesians 6:11-18; Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13) because the promised victory is ours (1 John 4:4).

B. God's promises concerning temptation.

1. There is no temptation that is unique to you (1 Peter 5:8-9).
2. There is no temptation beyond your ability to resist as God promised us in 1 Corinthians 10:12, 13:

12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.

13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

3. There is no temptation that Christ Himself does not understand and that He cannot help us with (Hebrews 4:15, 16; 7:25).

III. The Doctrine of Forgiveness Based on Christ's Death

Christ's death completely and totally dealt with all debts against God and the benefits of His death and resurrection are applied to anyone who comes and receives Christ by faith. At the moment of conversion God judicially, legally, declares the Christian forgiven. Nothing that we do can ever serve as a basis for forgiveness.

- A. Christ's death is the sole basis for our forgiveness (Hebrews 10:1-18).**
- B. Christ's death completely paid for all your sin and we can do nothing to improve upon it (Colossians 2:13,14; John 19:30).**
- C. God does not retry us for sin that He has already been judged at the cross (Romans 8:1; John 3:36; Psalm 103:12; Micah 5:19).**

IV. The Doctrine of Cleansing Based on Confession

1 John 1:9 is not an invitation to salvation, but an exhortation to those who are saved to maintain intimate fellowship with God. It is essential that the Christian not linger in sin but confess it and forsake it that he might walk in the light (1 John 1:1-2:4).

- A. It is important that we distinguish between positional and experiential truth.**
 - 1. A positional truth is something that is true of all believers because of their relationship with God — like the possession of a spiritual gift, something that is true of every believer (Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:7).**
 - 2. An experiential truth—does not speak of our position in Christ—but of our practice for Christ—so that we might experience what God has for us like in the exercise of a spiritual gift (1 Peter 4:10; 1 Timothy 4:14).**
 - 3. Positionally, every Christian has forgiveness of all their sins, past, present and future (Colossian 1:13, 14), but practically not every believer is experiencing that forgiveness (Psalm 32; 1 John 1:9).**

POSITIONAL FORGIVENESS

- 1. Begins when we receive Christ.**
- 2. It is eternal.**
- 3. It never changes.**
- 4. Basis for positional forgiveness is the blood of Christ.**

EXPERIENTIAL FORGIVENESS

- 1. Begins when we receive Christ.**
- 2. It is moment by moment.**
- 3. It changes when we sin.**
- 4. Basis for experiential forgiveness is the blood of Christ.**

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| 5. The position of God prior to our justification is He is our Judge, and we are condemned sinners. | 5. The position of God after our justification is He is our Father, and we are His children. |
| 6. Condition for our legal forgiveness is faith in Christ. | 6. Condition for fellowship forgiveness is confession of sin. |
| 7. Faith in Christ results in judicial or positional forgiveness. | 7. Confession of sin results in family or experiential forgiveness. |
- B. An illustration of positional vs. experiential forgiveness from John 13:1-11.**

1. The bath symbolized salvation, and Judas did not have this bath.
2. The washing of Peter's feet is symbolic of the fact that even though we who are born-again have been saved, as we walk in this world of sin sometimes our 'spiritual feet' get dirty & need cleansing.
3. When Jesus Christ tells Peter, "He who is bathed needs only to wash His feet" (13:10), He is teaching us that the fundamental cleansing that God provides is a once and for all act never to be repeated.
4. However, all of us need to 'cleansed' from the defilement of sin so that we might have what Christ refers to in verse eight as a "part with" Him.
5. You can only be effective in serving Christ if you are in fellowship with the Lord which is impossible with known unconfessed sin in your life.

V. Application

- A. Making a sin list and then destroy it.**
1. Our *confession* is to be made to God (1 John 1:9).
 2. Our *confession/restitution* is sometimes to be made to others (Mt. 5:23, 24).
- B. Keeping short accounts with God allows for continuous growth & service.**
- C. After confession we must distinguish between real guilt & false guilt.**

Memory Verses for this topic: 1 John 1:9; 1 Corinthians 10:12-13